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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 STATE 087532

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [MARR](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)  
AMGT, XD, AF, KPAO, EAID, KDEM  
SUBJECT: TFAF01 AFGHAN ELECTION WATCH: SIT REP AND  
S/SRAP MEDIA MESSAGING REPORT #5

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Operations Center Situation Report  
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11. (SBU) Begin Sitrep:  
KARZAI AND ABDULLAH BOTH CLAIM VICTORY  
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(SBU) A Karzai representative later backtracked from earlier claims of victory. Abdullah's campaign will file complaints of irregularities and acts of intimidation. Ghani, the third major candidate, indicated he might publicly allege election fraud. (TFAF01/SRAP e-mail)  
BALLOT COUNTING COMPLETED IN 30 OF 34 PROVINCES  
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(SBU) Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) must complete counting in Kabul, Baghlan, Nangarhar, and Herat provinces. Commentary on voter turnout remains speculative pending IEC findings. The IEC will not release final election results until September 17, after adjudication of complaints by the Electoral Complaints Commission. (TFAF01/Kabul telcon, Kabul 2459)

(SBU) Afghan Security Forces continue to provide security at polling centers and will support the

movement of ballot materials to the IEC tally center in Kabul with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) logistical support. ISAF reported a record number of uncoordinated and ineffective insurgent attacks on election day. (ISAF Afghan Election Summary VTC briefing)

#### ASSESSMENTS BY U.S. OBSERVER MISSIONS

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(SBU) The International Republican Institute (IRI) observers said the election appeared credible, though lower turnout, fraud, and abuse of state resources brought these polls to a lower standard than previous Afghan elections. (Kabul SitRep14)

(SBU) Democracy International (DI) observers in Kandahar City expect voter turnout to be no more than 10 to 15 percent. Rocket attacks in the afternoon might have reduced voting numbers. They did not directly observe any fraud or voters being prevented from voting. (Kabul SitRep 14)

#### MEDIA FOCUS ON SECURITY, FRAUD, TURNOUT, AND VOTE COUNT

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(U) Observers hailed the election as a success, after voting passed off relatively peacefully amid threats of insurgent attacks. Media also report allegations of fraud, and mixed voter turnout. (bbc.co.uk)

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#### S/SRAP Media Messaging

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12. (U) Begin Messaging:

STATE 00087532 002 OF 004

SUBJECT: TF01 AFGHAN ELECTION WATCH: SIT REP AND S/SRAP MEDIA MESSAGING REPORT

(U) Please find attached coordinated media messaging guidelines regarding the Afghan elections. This messaging has been cleared for public use throughout the Department and interagency. Updates will follow by 0600 and 1600 daily for the duration of the Department's Afghan Election Task Force.

#### SRAP: SUMMARY OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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Aug 22: Ramadan Begins  
Aug 22-23: Observer Mission Reports (EU Election Observer Mission, National Democratic Institute, FEFA); Press Conferences from IEC, ECC  
Aug 23: CJCS and Ambassador Eikenberry on Sunday morning talk shows  
Aug 24: IEC press conferences  
Aug 25 (NLT): Partial Results from IEC  
Sept 3: Preliminary Official Results  
Sept 17: Final Certified Results  
Oct 10: Possible Inauguration

#### Approximate Runoff Schedule

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Oct 1: Runoff elections  
Oct 15: Preliminary Results  
Oct 29: Final Results  
Nov 28: Possible Inauguration  
SUMMARY OF ELECTION STATEMENTS

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U.S. PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT: This was an important step forward in the Afghan people's effort to take control of their future, even as violent extremists are trying to stand in their way.... Over the last few days -- and particularly yesterday -- we've seen acts of violence and intimidation by the Taliban, and there may be more in the days to come. We knew that the Taliban would try to derail this election. Yet even in the face of this brutality, millions of Afghans exercised the right to

choose their leaders and determine their own destiny. And as I watched the election, I was struck by their courage in the face of intimidation, and their dignity in the face of disorder.... The United States did not support any candidate in this election. Our only interest was the result fairly, accurately reflecting the will of the Afghan people, and that is what we will continue to support as the votes are counted, and we wait for the official results from the Afghan Independent Electoral Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. Meanwhile, we will continue to work with our Afghan partners to strengthen Afghan security, governance, and opportunity. Full Statement:

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-the-recent-elections-in-Afghanistan/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-the-recent-elections-in-Afghanistan/)  
U.S. Embassy Kabul Statement: (Cable - Kabul 2451)  
NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen:  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B73C9A0F-D304FC01/natolive/opinions\\_57014.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B73C9A0F-D304FC01/natolive/opinions_57014.htm?mode=pressrelease)  
UN Special Representative of the Secretary General Kai Eide:  
<http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1761&ctl=Details&mid=1892&ItemID=5354>

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon:  
<http://unama.unmissions.org>

STATE 00087532 003 OF 004

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31821&Cr=afghan&Cr1>

White House Press Briefing:  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing\\_room/Press\\_Briefings/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing_room/Press_Briefings/)

State Department Daily Press Briefing:  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2009/index.htm>

SRAP: MESSAGING

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(U) In the coming days, speculation will continue regarding the election results, voter turnout and irregularities/fraud. The below messages are the basis for all USG commentary:

(U) Q: WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTIONS?  
August 20 was a good day for the people of Afghanistan and a bad day for the insurgency. Afghan security forces, with international support, ensured violence did not derail these elections. Approximately 95 percent of polling centers (6200 of 6523) opened and it seems clear that a great many Afghans defied Taliban attempts to deny them their right to vote.

The Afghan people should be commended for their courage in conducting this election despite the insurgent intimidation and logistical challenges of carrying out an election in Afghanistan, and we and the international community are proud to support them.

The electoral process is entering the critical phase of counting and verification of results.

(U) SECURITY: The fact that elections proceeded despite significant challenges, is a major step forward. Despite acts of violence and intimidation over the past few days, millions of Afghans exercised the right to choose their leaders and the future of their country. The Afghan Security Forces capably responded and ensured that insurgents were unable to disrupt this important day.

Afghan security forces prevented a number of incidents during the election day in various parts of the country. The IEC, supported by the UN and international community, also rose to the challenge and ensured

millions of Afghans who wanted to vote were able to do so.

(U) HAVE YOU SEEN REPORTS THAT X CAMPAIGN IS ANNOUNCING VICTORY?

Only the IEC is in a position to announce official results. Anything else is just speculation at this point. We call on all parties to exert patience and restraint and to wait for the official announcement of the election results.

(U) ARE THERE ANY PLANS FOR A RUN-OFF?

The IEC will determine if a run-off is necessary and lead preparations for a run-off, should they become necessary. The IEC has assured that adequate preparations will be in place.

(U) HAVE YOU SEEN X REPORT FROM X OBSERVER GROUP?

STATE 00087532 004 OF 004

SUBJECT: TFAP01 AFGHAN ELECTION WATCH: SIT REP AND S/SRAP MEDIA MESSAGING REPORT

Several observer groups will make statements in coming weeks. We are reviewing the reports as they come in. Observers play an important role in helping ensure a credible election. We appreciate their efforts in challenging circumstances.

It will be several days before official preliminary results are issued by the IEC, and we hope initial reports will refrain from speculation until results are announced. Final results - which will be certified only by the Independent Electoral Commission -- could take several weeks. We call on candidates and their supporters to behave responsibly during and after the elections.

(U) DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO CLAIMS OF FRAUD?

We condemn acts of fraud; it is important that the outcome of these elections reflects the will of the Afghan people. Robust mechanisms exist for dealing with incidents of fraud, through the IEC and the Electoral Complaints Commission. The formal complaints period for the ECC ends September 17, when the ECC will submit findings to the IEC for final determination.

A key way of combating fraud is the observer missions. The U.S. funded more than 360 observers from independent international NGOs and from Embassy Kabul to observe the process. These U.S. funded observers were present in 29 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

13. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.  
CLINTON